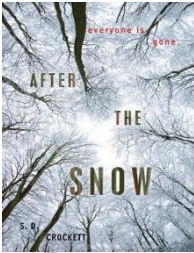




Fr. Michael Goetz Library Learning Commons Teacher's Book Review



After the Snow, S. D. Crockett
Reviewed by Ms. Cosgrove, November 7th, 2012.

Dystopian literature has become really popular since *The Hunger Games* made its debut. Instead of futuristic worlds where human beings live in peace and harmony and all citizens have what they need and/or want, writers in this century seem to be exploring worlds where the individual is an alienated creature hunted by a totalitarian government, where resources required for survival are scarce or nonexistent. This week's novel is set in a post-apocalyptic world, where the mismanagement of natural resources has resulted in the planet earth being plunged into another Ice Age.

The protagonist in this novel is a teenager named Willo, who along with immediate family and a collection of like minded survivalists, have carved a life for themselves in the mountains, far, far away from the cities where gangs of lawless killers thrive. Willo's father has taught him all he needs to know to survive in a world of ice and snow. This all changes one day when high upon a ridge, Willo witnesses his family being taken away in government trucks. The book traces his quest to be reunited with them. Along the way he meets many people, but none more unforgettable than the young girl, Mary, who becomes his main distraction from his original quest.

One challenge in reading this book is accepting Willo's unschooled manner of speech. The author wanted to convey to the reader a character who has been home schooled by people of the land. His language is not grammatically correct but the rhythm and cadence become familiar as you read further into the book. His manner of speaking contrasts with the various people he encounters along the way and the contrast makes for a more colorful dialogue in parts of the book.

I like the character of Willo very much. To some, he may appear simple at the start of the book, but the reader will learn very quickly that he is resilient and cunning and very courageous. I also like the imbedded message of the novel which focused on the environment. Humans are stewards of the planet, first and foremost, and the responsibility to care for its resources must be passed on to future generations, if there is to be any future at all.